

John Roberto, editor. *Digital Ministry and Leadership in Today's Church*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2022. 140 pages. \$16.95.

The book itself is presented to the reader as a workbook or manual rather a theoretical tome. This does not mean that the book is entirely operationalized, as will be noted below. What it does mean is that the material presented is done so practically, with the intention of being applied immediately into the context of the local congregation or parish. As is noted in the Introduction, the book “provides essential knowledge, practices, and skills to guide church leaders in creating digitally integrated ministry and faith formation in their churches” (p. 1). This goal is meant for both the local congregation in terms of discipleship, worship and preaching, but also for the global mission of the church in which the local congregation is engaged through prayer, evangelism, and social justice. Christian ministry and mission has more than one avenue through which to conduct the work of God. No longer is the work of God bound to the print world of the sanctuary; it is now also offered through the new Roman Roads of digital and social media.

In chapter 1, John Roberto, the book's editor, unpacks the new reality of ministry in a post-Covid world. New tools and media have emerged since 2020 that now allow the church to expand its reach in integrated and immersive ways. In chapter 2, Tim Welch, a leader in digital catechism, explores the various tools that the digital frontier offers to the local congregation—tools such as websites, video production, graphic design, and livestreaming options. This chapter is guided by a foundational principle of media—whoever controls the media controls the message. Welch's argument is that the church has resisted modern-day technology for far too long and much to its own detriment. Compared to the other chapters, this chapter is the proverbial “reading from a firehose.” However, it provides a formative and informative starting point. In chapter 3, Deanna Bartalini and Claudia McIvor, two educators, discuss how to build community through digital spaces, a continued concern. During the Covid pandemic, the concern of isolation was not only a church concern, as people figured out how to have block parties and game nights while staying indoors. This chapter focuses on various digital platforms that can be used to build communities online that also reach beyond the local congregation. In chapter 4, John Roberto discusses faith formation in the digital age through the use of hybrid tools such as video playlists and interactive courses that can be accessed through a congregation, parish or denomination's website. In chapter 5, Marge Babcock, a website developer and curator, provides a toolbox full of skills and ideas for organizing, evaluating, and developing digital resources for ministry and discipleship. Finally, in chapter 6, William Miller, a catechist educator, and John Roberto share their perspectives on the kind of competent leadership needed for ministry on the digital frontier, focusing primarily on the leader's own discipleship. The book ends with a list of suggested readings.

Overall, this is an extremely helpful resource in the ever-growing field of resources related to digital ministry. The advice and ideas are creative and innovative yet also thoughtful. This material is written with the smaller congregation that lacks resources in mind, as evidenced by Welch's chapter on various digital tools. Also, Babcock's chapter on resource curation is certainly unique and worth purchasing the book. The only concern noted, as is often noted with such resources, is the lack of real-life examples. While this book does offer some examples, it lacks sufficient examples overall, reminding the reader of the work that lies ahead.

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